

that opposed advancement of this bill at that time. Subsequent to the bill being advanced, on March 24 or rather March 22, four days after the bill was advanced, Judge Reagan wrote to Senator Barnett, and I had circulated yesterday afternoon, placed on your desks, the letter from Judge Reagan as well as the letter from Mrs. Cathy Moore who is the representative from the Adoptive Parents Association that indicated that they had come to a consensus and that they felt that a guardian ad litem should indeed be appointed for the children involved in these type cases. The amendment is to do just that. It is the amendment that was offered and sent with a letter to Senator Barnett. It is the amendment that Judge Reagan favors. It is one that was discussed with the Adoptive Parents Association and they are in concurrence and agreement. I would move then for the adoption of this amendment.

SPEAKER LUEDTKE: The Chair recognizes Senator Marsh.

SENATOR MARSH: Mr. President, and members of the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislature, I stand to support the amendment by Senator Stoney to LB 169. The purpose of having a guardian ad litem is to protect the rights of the minor person involved. This will guarantee that not only the mother's attorney, the mother will be represented by an attorney, the father by an attorney, but there will be a specific person designated to protect the rights of the child and it may not always be one of the attorneys for a parent is in a position to protect the rights of the minor child. I urge your adoption of this amendment.

SPEAKER LUEDTKE: The Chair recognizes Senator Mills.

SENATOR MILLS: Mr. President, I have a question of Senator Stoney. Could you review, Senator Stoney, your exact amendment again?

SENATOR STONEY: Yes, sir, Senator Mills. Hold on please. Senator Mills, the amendment is found on page 314 of the Journal and it reads as follows: "Whenever a termination of parental rights is placed in issue by the pleadings or evidence, the court shall forthwith appoint an attorney as guardian ad litem." I think Senator Marsh just explained the reason for a guardian ad litem. That means that the child then will also have a representative. That guardian then can personally investigate the facts and the circumstances pertinent to the best interest and the welfare of that child or children. Then if it appears to the guardian ad litem that it is in the best interest or the welfare of the child or children, they may require the termination of parental rights of one or both parents.

SENATOR MILLS: Okay, Senator Stoney. Thank you. Members of the Legislature, we're treading on some very, very emotional grounds. We're not talking about adoptive parents. You're talking about, read the bill where it says with the dissolution of a marriage. I would ask you to look at that very closely and, Senator Barnett, did your Committee hear this bill? Did they hear from people who are divorced parents coming forth and saying, hey, we ought to have a guardian appointed to those children to see if they really ought to live with their mother or their father? Senator Barnett, may I ask you a question of that sort?